

## Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9513

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3187

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH DE LA GORCE

1. HAD LUNCH AT FRENCH EMBASSY WITH DE LA GORCE AND FRENCH AMBASSADOR. GORCE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY GUEGUINOU WHO, LIKE GORCE, WAS WITH COUVE ON HIS MISSION LAST FALL TO LEBANON.

2. LIKE MYSELF, GORCE IS MAKING THE ROUNDS AND, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ARAFAT AND COMPANY, IT IS THE SAME AS MY OWN. HE DOES NOT PLAN TO STAY TOO LONG BUT AS HE SAID, THE FRENCH HAVE ALREADY DONE THEIR HOMEWORK AT THE TIME OF THE COUVE MISSION.

3. IN ESSENCE I FIND THAT GORCE'S THINKING PARALLELS MY OWN. THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IS RELUCTANT TO LET GO, BUT MUST LET GO. THE SYRIANS HAVE AN ESSENTIAL ROLE TO PLAY. MODERATION, CONCILIATION AND DIALOGUE MUST BE PREPARED. GORCE WELCOMED THE ACTION TAKEN TODAY BY PARLIAMENT TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION TO ENABLE FRANGIE'S EARLY DEPARTURE. HE SHARES MY UNEASINESS THAT, DESPITE ALL THE ASSURANCES WE HAVE RECEIVED, FRANGIE MIGHT TRY SOMEHOW TO HANG ON AND HE DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT WE MIGHT NOT AT ONE TIME HAVE TO TELL HIM TO GO.

4. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT FRANGIE'S VERSION OF WHAT I HAD SAID ABOUT SECURITY AND A CONSORTIUM HAD NOT FILTERED THROUGH TOO WELL SO  
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I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM GORCE DIRECTLY, EMPHASIZING WE

SAW A SYRIAN ROLE BOTH IN THE PROVISIONAL SECURITY FORCE PRIOR TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND IN THE CONSORTIUM FOLLOWING THEM. GORCE'S REACTION SEEMED QUITE FAVORABLE.

5. GORCE DID NOT PUSH ANY PARTICULAR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. INDEED HE STATED THAT, DURING HIS CALLS, HE WAS TAKING PAINS NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS DOING SO. CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, HE RAISED VERY PRACTICAL POINTS. HE SAID THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR FRANGIE TO BE ASSURED BY THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO A POST-ELECTION INVESTIGATION. I DECIDED TO SHARE WITH HIM THE INFORMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED TO THE EFFECT THAT SARKIS HAD REALIZED THIS NECESSITY MONTHS AGO AND HAD INFORMED FRANGIE ACCORDINGLY. WE BOTH AGREED THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT BE A "YES MAN". HE MUST BE SOMEONE OF STATURE AND INTEGRITY, HOPEFULLY WITH SOME CHARISMA. MOREOVER, HE MUST HAVE THE SUPPORT OF A VAST MAJORITY OF THE PARLIAMENT. A 50 VOTE WIN WOULD SIMPLY NOT DO.

6. WE NOTICED THAT THE PRESS HAD GATHERED OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY AND DECIDED THAT ARGOD SHOULD BE CHOSEN TO FACE IT. IT WAS AGREED THAT HE WOULD MAKE RATHER ANODYNE COMMENTS. GORCE AND I HAD HAD AN INTERESTING AND FRUITFUL EXCHANGE ON THE PRESENT SITUATION. WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, ESPECIALLY ABILITY OF PARLIAMENT TO GET CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS STARTED. WE WERE BOTH AWARE OF THE NEED FOR MODERATION, CONCILIATION AND DIALOGUE.

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